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ABSTRACT

The Urban Community College Transfer Opportunities Project (UCCTOP), funded by the Ford Foundation in 1984, induced LaGuardia Community College (LCC) to critically examine, systematize, and strengthen its approaches to transfer and articulation. Viewing the major barrier to transfer as students' lack of clarity about their goals and options, LCC has focused on improving transfer information and broadening transfer options. To meet students' information needs, LCC has developed: (1) a Transfer Information Guide, which assists students in selecting the best possible combination of courses for transfer purposes; (2) a Career Development Module, which introduces educational and career planning in the required Freshman Seminar; (3) a Transfer Seminar, which focuses on educational planning, college choice, and the application process; (4) a biannual Transfer Fair, which provides students with an opportunity to discuss admissions criteria, academic programs, credit transfer, and other issues with four-year college representatives; and (5) the Career Transfer Resource Center, which offers a variety of print and computerized resources. In its attempt to broaden students' transfer options, LCC has joined with Baruch College and Queens College to develop and implement a Joint Admissions Program; established a partnership with Vassar College to give students the opportunity to experience a private, selective, four-year college setting; formed another transfer partnership with Clark College (Georgia) to encourage continued education at historically black institutions; and forged linkages with other four-year private institutions. The impact of the UCCTOP project on LCC can be measured in terms of the number of grant activities that will be institutionalized by the end of the funding cycle, the amount of college resources devoted to the operationalization of the project, and the changes that have taken place at the college. (EJV)

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INTERIM REPORT ON ACTIVITIES

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THE URBAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER OPPORTUNITIES PROJECT AT LAGUARDIA

INTERIM REPORT ON ACTIVITIES

The Urban Community College Transfer Opportunities Project II, funded by the Ford Foundation in 1984, induced LaGuardia Community College to critically examine, systematize and strengthen its approaches to transfer and articulation. As a result, the institution is a different place. The project objectives have been largely met. Several initiatives--curricular and in support services areas--characterize LaGuardia's transfer program which permeates every sector of the college.

This brief report outlines accomplishments as well as areas that need further attention. It emphasizes the collaborative nature of the project and its impact on the City University community. The transfer project has generated more attention and follow-up action than any other grant. In fact, it may be still too early to measure its full potential for institutional change at LaGuardia and university wide.

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING THE TRANSFER FUNCTION

In addressing the transfer issue, LaGuardia identified as a major barrier that students are unclear about continuing their education. They need to explore the needs and benefits of education beyond the Associate's degree. Also, they need to consider the range of options for financing, planning and obtaining the baccalaureate. In response to this question, the

College has developed five strategies under two broad categories which are discussed below.

IMPROVING TRANSFER INFORMATION

Transfer Information Guide

A major feature of LaGuardia's program is a system to deliver transfer information to all students, faculty and counselors. To this end, the Transfer Information Guide was produced and is now available in the library, the Career and Transfer Resource Center, Counseling Department, academic departmental offices and through counselors and faculty advisors. The Guide enables students to select the best possible combination of LaGuardia courses for transfer purposes. It encourages students to exercise greater responsibility in their academic and career decisions. The Guide also provides information for faculty regarding the relative value of their courses in parallel baccalaureate programs. They are able to determine the relationship of individual courses to different four-year curricula. This knowledge has sparked some departments to modify some courses, to seek out four-year faculty to discuss better articulation, and to add more rigor to existing courses.

The Guide was subdivided by curriculum and option within a curriculum and distributed to the pertinent constituency last fall. For example, seven thousand seven hundred ninety two students, and over three hundred faculty and counselors have

received this information. Furthermore, a "Transfer Bulletin" was developed by curriculum, which summarizes the five crucial points to consider for transfer and highlights the maximum numbers of credits that students will be able to transfer to specific four-year colleges and universities.

Career Development Module

Another major feature of LaGuardia's program is the Career Development Module. Its goal is to introduce educational and career planning in Freshman Seminar, a required course for all new students during their first quarter at the College. The instructional activities of the module enable students to: a) identify personal data that have influenced their career development; b) evaluate their educational or career choices in light of career choice theory; c) relate the concept of career ladder or occupational levels to values, abilities, skills and advanced educational preparation after LaGuardia.

Last fall over three thousand newly enrolled students utilized the module in over ninety sections of the Freshman Seminar. The majority of those polled (60%) indicated that they were seriously thinking about transfer. These students also felt that the topic of educational and career planning helped them to become aware of skills required and education needed in their career choice.

Transfer Seminar

An additional feature of LaGuardia's program is the Transfer Seminar which students take in tandem with the second Cooperative Education Seminar. This seminar focuses on three major aspects of the transfer decision making process: a) planning for education; b) college selection; c) application procedures and requirements. Students enrolled in the second Cooperative Education Seminar have generally about 45 credits or two thirds of the total required for graduation. Therefore, they have ample time to begin preparing for transfer six to nine months later.

Transfer Fair

Still another feature of LaGuardia's program is the College Transfer Fair. This biannual event provides students and senior college representatives an opportunity to discuss one-on-one substantive issues such as general admissions criteria, academic programs, transferability of credits, financial aid and scholarships, and quality of life on campus.

College representatives and students praised the quality of the fair. It is well organized and well managed. Colleges see the fair as a positive setting to communicate with students who are serious about continuing their education and the latter come with much valuable information which assists them in plotting a course of action.

Career and Transfer Resource Center

The Career and Transfer Resource Center is another feature of LaGuardia's program. The Center has acquired a high level of visibility among students. Records show that over a thousand students were served in the six-month period from July 1 through December 31, 1986. This is a significant increase in the number of students who access the services of the Center. Most inquiries are connected with class assignments. However, Center staff has seen an increase in the number of applications for CUNY senior colleges that were processed during the same period. Demand for utilization of Center resources, such as the computerized guidance system and other print materials dealing with transfer and careers, has increased. The Center also makes available scholarship applications from a variety of sources and assists students in processing these applications.

BROADENING TRANSFER OPTIONS

In addressing the transfer issue, the College identified that most students encounter difficulties in changing attitude into behaviors. Personal fears and lack of self-esteem seemed to inhibit the students capacity to seize transfer opportunities.

Joint Admissions Program.

LaGuardia joined Baruch College and Queens College to develop and implement a joint admissions program. Its goals are: to strengthen the notion of continuity between community college and

senior college academic programs; to encourage students to seek transfer information and guidance at the beginning of their careers, to provide opportunities for interactions between community college students and four-year college advisors; and to serve as motivating factor for students who may not be considering a baccalaureate degree.

Business students (accounting, business administration, business management) receive letters of acceptance signed by President Shenker and President Segall of Baruch College. Computer Science and Liberal Arts students receive letters of acceptance signed by President Shenker and President Kenny of Queens College. Students receive joint admissions letters prior to their first registration at the College.

Vassar College Partnership.

Vassar College and LaGuardia established a partnership that gives community college students the opportunity to experience a private, selective, residential four-year college setting. A selective, residential college is not an option that most LaGuardia students consider.

The partnership provides two-year and four-year faculty an opportunity to create and to team teach the curriculum which is offered to students during the five-week summer institute on the Vassar campus. Both institutions conceptualized the program as transitional teaching, teaching which fundamentally changes the self-image of the student.

The design of the program is entirely collaborative. All participants-- students and faculty-- are invited and participate voluntarily. Students are identified by faculty based on the quality of their work, motivation and potential for success. Faculty in each college are selected for their effectiveness in and commitment to courses and extracurricular endeavors.

The strength and contribution of the residential program could have not been predicted. Living and studying together helped students coalesce as a social group. Sharing living space was a profound intercultural experience which broke down stereotypes and promoted understanding and opened up horizons. The exploring transfer period turned vague information about educational potentials into real aspirations.

The experience proved transformational for the faculty, too. The team teaching mode provided a powerful antidote to the "burn out" syndrome for community college faculty. They returned to the community college asking for increased rigor and assigning more work. Vassar College faculty also reported that their teaching changed as a result of the summer experience. LaGuardia recognized a broader range of abilities in the students and acknowledged that the students have not been challenged. Vassar faculty found themselves immersed in the learning community.

The results of two summer institutes are encouraging. Ten participants have transferred to Vassar College, New York University, Clark College and City University senior colleges. Other students are in the process of applying to Middlebury

College, Clarkson College, Howard University.

With plans for a third summer institute underway, it was reassuring to learn that the future of this collaboration between a private four-year institution and a public community college has been secured. Vassar College recently received funds from the Starr Foundation, Chase Manhattan Bank Corporation and the Manufacturers Hanover Corporation to continue the summer institute for five more years.

Following are some of the problems facing students who wish to transfer to private, residential, selective colleges. Four-year faculty found community college students underprepared in laboratory science and recognized that students were more comfortable in humanities and social science areas. There is a need for two-year faculty to monitor the level of preparation more carefully. Admissions, Financial Aid, and Housing are separate processes at four-year institutions. Transfer students experience difficulties negotiating that system. Orientation is still not satisfactory from the point of view of the student. Counselors need to be aware of the complexity of the task facing the transfer students.

The Ford Foundation has awarded a grant to Wilberforce University, an historically black college, to initiate a summer institute program modeled after the Vassar-LaGuardia partnership. Wilberforce's project will draw community college students from Cleveland and Dayton, Ohio and Detroit, Michigan systems. The first group of students will arrive on the Wilberforce campus in

the summer of 1988.

LaGuardia-Clark Connection

LaGuardia and Clark College joined in a transfer partnership to encourage graduates of two-year programs to continue their education at historically black institutions. There are three LaGuardia graduates currently enrolled at Clark. One of these students was awarded a $1,000 scholarship for outstanding academic achievement during her first year at Clark. The hallmarks of the LaGuardia-Clark project are faculty involvement and clearly identified transfer courses. In addition, transfer students are guaranteed on-campus housing during their first year in Atlanta to help ease culture shock.

Undoubtedly, the LaGuardia-Clark connection has much to offer students. However, there are mitigating factors which must be addressed before the full potential of this project is realized. Only one of them is financial. The others include geography, suitable housing, if on campus accommodations are not available, and living away from home.

As a spin-off of the cooperation between LaGuardia and Clark, the United Negro College Fund selected LaGuardia as one of ten community colleges nationwide for a special collaborative program linking UCC/TOP I institutions and twenty historically black colleges. It is anticipated that one or two more partnerships will be developed, particularly with institutions which offer parallel baccalaureate programs. One such linkage is

under consideration between LaGuardia and Bethune-Cookman College. This project is of particular interest, because it also links an employer, Walt Disney World Productions, in the process.

Linkages With Four-Year Private Institutions.

Approximately one third of LaGuardia graduates who transfer select a private college or university to continue their education. Private institututions are practically inaccessible settings for those who must work to support themselves and their families. However, without financial support, poor, unattached students find it almost impossible to afford the cost of education in these institutions.

For instance, Long Island University offers an eighteen-credit program on the LaGuardia campus to graduates of our accounting, business administration, business management, and computer operations majors. This arrangement provides LaGuardia graduates the opportunity to begin taking credits toward the bachelor's degree in Business Administration without leaving our campus. At the completion of this program, students can earn a four-year degree at L.I.U. by taking an additional forty-four credits. Moreover, tuition for the eighteen-credit program is significantly reduced.

Long Island University also offers annually full tuition scholarships to four LaGuardia graduates who decide to continue in that institution. Candidate names are submitted by LaGuardia to L.I.U. which makes the final decisions.

The arrangement with Middlebury College is another of these partnerships. Middlebury, upon the recommendation of LaGuardia, will consider for admission up to four of our graduates. Middlebury will accept a maximum of 64 credits, and students can complete most baccalaureate programs within two years or 18 additional units. In addition, Middlebury College will meet the financial needs of the students to make it possible for them to attend that institution. The amount of the awards varies according to individual needs and ability to pay.

QUANTITIVE IMPACT ON THE COLLEGE

The Urban Community College Transfer Opportunities II grant has clearly energized LaGuardia, affecting it in major ways. The institution has channeled its resources and has brought them to bear on the transfer project.

The first way to measure its impact is to look at how many of the processes set in motion by the grant are or will be institutionalized by the end of the funding cycle. The "Career Development Module" was incorporated into the Freshman Seminar curriculum as of September 1986. This course is required for all students who enroll at the College for the first time. The "Transfer Seminar" is available to students who are registered in Cooperative Education Seminar II. Approximately three hundred fifty students enroll quarterly in this course. The College Fair was renamed the College Transfer Fair to highlight the new emphasis on transfer at LaGuardia. Also, the event was completely

redesigned to allow one-on-one counseling by four-year college representatives. Students are prepared through workshops and handouts to deal with qualitative issues regarding transfer that make them more informed consumers. Business, computer science and liberal arts students receive Joint Admission letters prior to their first registration at the college. They represent 85% of our enrollment. The Transfer Information Guide was published in Fall 1986. It has been given collegewide distribution. Every student and faculty on campus has received a copy of this document by curriculum. The Career and Transfer Resource Center has widened its services, which include print, non-print and computer software materials. The Committee on Articulation and Transfer was appointed two years ago. It has representatives of business and liberal arts areas. Through a Title III grant, the College has designed and implemented an automated academic advisement system, which shows students the next courses to take to complete their degrees. The Alumni Support Group will be implemented over the spring and summer quarters. This mentor group should encourage students to continue toward the baccalaureate degree.

A second way to measure the impact of UCC/TOP II is to enumerate the amount of college resources which are being dedicated to operationalize this project. The College has assigned senior administrators to manage it. Top level administrators (the President, Vice President and Deans) have met twice yearly to review the implementation plans. The College has engaged two distinguished educators, Dr. Reginald Wilson and L.

Stephen Zwerling to evaluate the program. We believe that the choice of two evaluators will contribute to deeper insights about our transfer initiative. Each has spent two days on campus reviewing and commenting on materials. The Dean of Students has assigned one counselor to work full-time on transfer issues. Other counselors have joined his efforts through the Transfer Committee. Six counselors have been trained to implement the "Transfer Seminar" curriculum. They have taught it at least once. A group of senior faculty have worked closely with the Associate Director of the project to develop, refine and implement the Vassar Institute. They have met regularly through the year to select participants to develop curriculum. They have also made presentations to faculty and students during Opening Sessions. The Dean of Faculty rehired the firm of Kane, Parsons and Associates to replicate the 1983 study on the transfer activity of our students.

A third way to measure the influence of UCC/TOP II is to determine the changes in the institution. The Ford grant has prompted faculty to ask how their courses articulate vis a vis a parallel baccalaureate program. Selected faculty in each department became knowledgeable about transfer issues and the levels of literacy that are required in upper division courses. The Dean of Faculty has appointed a Task Force on Liberal Arts and Science to review the liberal arts and science components of all academic programs. A highten awareness of transfer issues has by and large shaped the agenda of this group. Project directors, chairpersons, faculty, counselors, admission offices,

and registrars have banded together under the transfer thrust as if a new mission was discovered by the College.

Obviously, the Ford grant has created a new collective goal for various constituencies of the College. LaGuardia has responded with a commitment that involves human as well as financial resources. The faculty and counselors have renewed their involvement with students in a way that is typical of individuals who have identified a new crusade.

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